

and preventing more people from ending up there in the first place. Two weeks ago, I visited West Virginia to meet with families battling prescription drug and heroin abuse, as well as people who are working on new solutions for treatment and rehabilitation. And last week, I traveled to Chicago to thank police chiefs from across the country for all that their officers do to protect Americans, to make sure they get the resources to get the job done, and to call for commonsense gun safety reforms that would make officers and their communities safer.

We know that having millions of people in the criminal justice system, without any ability to find a job after release, is unsustainable. It's bad for communities, and it's bad for our economy. So, on Monday, I'll travel to Newark, New Jersey, to highlight efforts to help Americans who've paid their debt to society reintegrate back into their communities. Everyone has a role to play, from businesses that are hiring ex-offenders to philanthropies that are supporting education and training programs. And

I'll keep working with people in both parties to get criminal justice reform bills to my desk, including a bipartisan bill that would reduce mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders and reward prisoners with shorter sentences if they complete programs that make them less likely to commit a repeat offense.

There's a reason that good people across the country are coming together to reform our criminal justice system. Because it's not about politics. It's about whether we as a nation live up to our founding ideal of liberty and justice for all. And working together, we can make sure that we do.

Thanks, everybody. Have a great weekend. And have a safe and happy Halloween.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 4:30 p.m. on October 30 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast on October 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 30, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on October 31.

Remarks on Signing the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 *November 2, 2015*

Well, last week, Democrats and Republicans came together to set up a responsible, long-term budget process, and what we now see is a budget that reflects our values, that grows our economy, creates jobs, keeps America safe.

It's going to strengthen the middle class by investing in critical areas like education and job training, basic research. It keeps us safe by investing in our national security and making sure that our troops get what they need in order to keep us safe and perform all the outstanding duties that they do around the world. It protects our seniors by avoiding harmful cuts to Medicare and Social Security. And it's paid for in a responsible, balanced way, in part, for example, by making sure that large hedge funds and private equity firms pay what they owe in taxes just like everybody else.

And by locking in 2 years of funding, it should finally free us from the cycle of shut-

down threats and last-minute fixes. It allows us to, therefore, plan for the future.

So I very much appreciate the work that the Democratic and Republican leaders did to get this to my desk. I think it is a signal of how Washington should work. And my hope is now that they build on this agreement with spending bills that also invest in America's priorities without getting sidetracked by a whole bunch of ideological issues that have nothing to do with our budget.

So this is just the first step between now and the middle of December, before the Christmas break. The appropriators are going to have to do their job; they're going to have to come up with spending bills. But this provides them the guidepost and the baseline with which to do that. And I'm confident that they can get it done on time. And there's no better Christmas present for the American people because this will allow the kind of stability and will allow the

economy to grow at a time when you've got great weakness in economies around the world. This puts us on a responsible path, and it makes sure that the American people are the beneficiaries.

So I very much appreciate their work. Let's keep it going. With that, I'm going to sign it.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

And I want to thank, in particular, the staffs of both Democratic and Republican leaders in both the House and the Senate because they worked overtime to get this done. I want to

thank my own staff—in particular, Katie Fallon and Brian Deese, who are standing in the back. They gave up a bunch of lost weekends to make this happen, but they did an outstanding job. We're very proud of them. Okay?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to White House Senior Adviser Brian C. Deese. H.R. 1314, approved November 2, was assigned Public Law No. 114–74.

Remarks at Rutgers University–Newark in Newark, New Jersey November 2, 2015

The President. Well, good afternoon, everybody. It is good to be in Newark. Let me, first of all, thank your chancellor, Nancy Cantor, for hosting us here today. Where's Nancy? There she is. Your mayor, Ras Baraka, is here. Your Senator, Cory Booker, is in the house. Where did Cory go? He's around here. There he is, right here. Your Congressman, Donald Payne, Jr.

You know——

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. [Laughter] Over the course of this year, I've been talking to people all across the country about reforming our criminal justice system to be fairer, to be smarter, to be more effective. I've met with police chiefs and beat cops. I've met with prisoners, corrections officers. I've met with families of fallen police officers and families of children who were killed by gun violence. I've met with men and women battling drug abuse and rehab coaches and folks working on new solutions for treatment.

And I have to tell you that from all these conversations, I have at times despaired about the magnitude of the problem. I've asked myself, how do we break the cycle that has young children somehow on that pipeline where they end up incarcerated? And yet what's interesting is, I've been really hopeful as well during the course of this year because what I've seen is that there are people across the board—folks

who work inside the criminal justice system, folks who are affected by the criminal justice system—who are saying, there's got to be a better way to do this and are not just asking questions about how we make the system smarter and more effective, but are also showing us how it's done and are actually implementing it.

This afternoon I spent with the mayor and Senator Booker getting a firsthand look at how Newark is helping to lead the way. And as a partner in our "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, the mayor and the Senator and Congressman and others are working in a public-private partnership to focus on disrupting the pipeline from underfunded schools to overcrowded jails. Here in Newark, when it comes to rehabilitating prisoners and reintegrating former inmates into society, you've got organizations that are doing extraordinary work. And that's why I wanted to focus here today, because places like Integrity House, the work that's being done in our Federal ReNew program through the District Court and our U.S. Attorney's Office—they are accomplishing extraordinary things—and when you meet folks who are taking that step to break addiction and overcome great odds and you see what they've already accomplished and what more they're going to accomplish in the future, you cannot help but feel hopeful about the future.